IMPORTANT DATES
Please also remember the online calendar.

TERM I

Mon 1 Feb 7pm Class 9 Parent Meeting
Tue 2 Feb School Photos
Class 9 Preparation Day
3-5 Feb Class 9 Camp
Tue 9 Feb Shrove Tuesday
9-12 Feb Class 4 Camp
Wed 17 Feb 6pm Board Meeting
Fri 19 Feb Community Evening

Next newsletter admissions deadline: Wed 10 February

Dear all,

Welcome. It has been an enriching and nourishing week as all staff gathered on Monday to start our year’s journey together as a College of Teachers and then welcoming the children back to school on Wednesday and Thursday. Working as a College of Teachers in a Steiner School is such a privilege. In our school the College is the group that seeks to bring the spiritual impulses of the education flowing into our teaching. It is also responsible with myself for working towards our vision:

to educate towards freedom of the human spirit

The staff Conference focused on our educational and social tasks as teachers. This year with our School Improvement Plan direction we are working with the focus on beauty, quality education and communication. We will also work on enlivening festivals, curriculum development (vertical and horizontal skills development mapping) and classroom observations.

Welcome to all of the new families and staff across the school. I hope your journey with us is life changing where there is personal development and new relationships are born. This has certainly been the case for me over my 20-year relationship as a parent and teacher at Sophia Mundi. I ask that all parents and students create an environment of trust and openness to welcome and provide an easy transition into our community. A number of our new families have made significant changes in their lives directions to be with us and their stories are inspirational.

From Calendar of the Soul, by Rudolf Steiner

“My intuition firmly commands me:
"Bury the spirit's treasures within you so that these ripening gifts of God, growing in the soil of your soul, may bring forth the very fruits of your own selfhood."

Photos taken from the welcome ceremony on Thursday morning.
Yesterday morning was the first of those special turning points for our Prep and Class 1 children and parents. Katina Kondos (Primary Faculty Head) warmly welcomed families and friends before the Class 5 students took their buddies by the hand (mostly) to meet Dianne Paull – our Class 1 teacher.

As we move into the New Year our Management Team are Katina Kondos (Primary), Nikollas Sakellaropoulos (Senior Secondary), Ben Darby (Secondary), Dilys Hannaford (Administration), John Bradshaw (Business Manager) and myself. Please know that as Principal my office door is always open to the community however the person that knows your child or young person best is their Class Teacher or Guardian. So if you have a concern or question around your child these staff are your first port of call. If the concern is not appropriately addressed the next port of call is the appropriate Head of Faculty or Welfare teacher (Geraldine Devas). Should these fail to address the concern an appointment can be made with me.

A big thank you to all of the parents and staff that have contributed to the transformation of the "heart" courtyard over the summer. There have been at least fourteen days of work during the "holidays" with some of the parents there on nearly all of those days – an amazing effort of voluntary work. There is still a reasonable amount of work to be done to realise the Playground group and TCL’s vision and Jeroen’s design and I look forward to catching up with you at upcoming working bees.

I look forward to our journey together this year.

Warmest regards,

Fiona

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**AFTERCARE PLACES**

Welcome to the new school year!

Any families, new or returning, who wish to place their child in aftercare this year, will need to book in with Amy-Kate or Megan in Reception. We encourage you to do so as soon as possible. There are spaces available on all days (Monday–Thursday).

If you are new to the idea of Aftercare, Fiona Couttie is happy to talk to you. You can contact her via email, fiona.couttie@sophiamundi.vic.edu.au or find her most afternoons in the cottage (Aftercare room).

**THE TOBIAS CLASS**

I am pleased to introduce the opportunity for students to extend and enrich their learning during 30min intensive sessions at the end of Main Lessons, 3 days a week, which build breadth and depth into the curriculum, as students explore practical and project based learning during the Tobias Class, which is linked to the Main Lesson to integrate and extend knowledge.

If you would like to find out more about this program please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely Raquel

raquel.mcconnell@sophiamundi.vic.edu.au

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Photos of the developing "Heart" Playground
SCHOOL PHOTO DAY IS TUESDAY 2 FEBRUARY

The whole school photo will be happening at 9am sharp! If your child is running late, they will miss the whole school photo.

Please take the time to read the relevant information on the MSP Photography payment Envelopes that went home with ALL children on Friday. Also remember these helpful hints:

• Don’t seal envelopes inside each other. You can pay for all children in one envelope, however each child needs to have their own envelope on photo day.
• Family envelopes (for family and sibling photos) are available at the school office upon request.
• Please enclose correct money as no change is given. Payment options are cash, credit card and online.

For any enquiries, please feel free to contact MSP Directly on

e: data.nem@msp.com.au  p: 03 9466 7331 www.msp.com.au

OVERDUE SCHOOL FEES

We understand that paying school fees may have been the last thing on your mind while relaxing over the holiday period. Nonetheless, this is a timely and urgent reminder to all parents/guardians who have not paid their now overdue school fees that they SHOULD ALREADY HAVE DONE SO prior to the start of term one.

CHRISTMAS MARKETS

There are a number of stall holders who did not pay the fee for their stall at last years Christmas Market. If you were a stall holder, and have not paid, can you please do as soon as possible.

IMAGE CONSENT FORMS

Next week, the office will be emailing all parents an updated image consent form. During the course of the year we take many photos of the school and students attending our many wonderful festivals and events. We would like to use many of these on our facebook page, blog and our new instagram account. These photos are also used for internal promotion such as use in handbooks, flyers and forms. Please complete the image consent forms so we may use the photos to promote our beautiful school.

HOST FAMILY REQUIRED FOR LUKAS

The school is very lucky to have the willing service each year of a young German volunteer who helps Sophia Mundi teachers and staff to deliver sports activities, community festivals, school plays, canteen services, Aftercare, gardening, administration …and the list goes on and on. In fact, it is fair to say that there is not a single student at the school who doesn’t benefit from the volunteer’s work at the school at some time in their school week.

Sophia Mundi undertakes to provide our valued volunteers with room and board type accommodation during their years’ service, and we in turn rely on families from the school community to put up their hand to provide a spare room and a family environment for a part of the volunteer’s stay. It makes sense, both to the host families, and for the sake of the volunteer having a broad range of experiences during their stay, that the year is broken into two or three segments with different families.

Host families are paid a weekly allowance by the school to defray expenses. The school also provides a bicycle and public transport costs directly to the volunteer. Should you wish to discuss the possibility of hosting Lukas for a period please phone or email Dilys at the school office.
STOP THE PRESS. WANT TO HEAR SOMETHING AMAZING
CHECK OUT THE RESULTS OF SOPHIA MUNDI’S GRADUATES OF 2015

Looking at the results of the students who completed the International Baccalaureate in 2015, here are some of the standouts:

• 100% pass rate.
• Half the students received an equivalent notional ATAR of 90 or above. The ATAR or ”Australian Tertiary Admission Rank” is the main criterion for entry into University into Australia.
• Many of our students received a perfect score (7/7) for some of their internal assessments (IAs): Physics (3), Chemistry (2), Mathematics (2), Theatre (2), History (1), French ab (1).
• We have our first entrant into Law.
• One student, who got a perfect score for art, has gained entry into a prestigious, international photo journalism course.
• Five students received the highest possible scores for at least one of their subjects. Two of those received perfect scores in two subjects.

Is that not an extraordinary result? The more so given that some of them had considerable assistance over the years from the Support Education team, particularly in literacy support. Further, unlike other private schools, who tend to only have the academically exceptional students attempt IB, at Sophia Mundi it is compulsory for all. The fact that we more than matched it with the big private schools is a significant achievement.

So, go tell everyone! You are part of something quite special. Schools often advertise some version of their students, “achieving their highest potential”. We are delivering on that claim since starting IB in 2012, and have achieved a 100% IB pass rate the last two years – this relates to all students receiving a notional ATAR of 78 and above.

It is surprising to our secondary staff that our work is not better known amongst all parents in the younger classes. There seems to be a perception that we are a good and caring school up until the end of class 6, but an unknown quantity after that. There has been a view that to get a really good secondary education you need to go to a big private school. What these results are saying is that the great work being done in the primary school is being continued in the middle school and years 11 and 12. The combined efforts of dedicated teachers, supportive parents and creative, well rounded students is a recipe for success that is playing out in a spectacular fashion at Sophia Mundi.

Academic success is not our only measure of value. Indeed, one of the aspects of the IB that most appealed to us when thinking about its introduction, was its goal of providing a well-rounded education. This is based on the students doing subjects from each of the key learning areas: the humanities and languages, the maths/ sciences and the arts, rather than narrowly specialising. There is a lot of fear these days around the idea that, if my son or daughter doesn’t focus early on the kind of skills that they will need in the workforce, then they will be severely disadvantaged. Our view is that a strong young person is best served by having had a broad range of learning experiences and being taught to think clearly, feel deeply and act dynamically. No matter what their subsequent work opportunities, these things are at the core of resilience and fulfilling lives. We believe that our graduates are well able to meet the world as a result of their opportunities at Sophia Mundi.

This view is strongly borne out by the Universities, who have a distinct preference for IB students. They know that the IB students have received a rigorous,
well rounded education which encourages self directed learning – exactly what is needed in tertiary education and in the workforce. Universities acknowledge that IB students normally finish their courses – the “drop out” rate is much much lower than that of VCE students.

There has been concern for the less academic students managing such a rigorous course as the IB. It is the case that the IB is a difficult two years and that it requires dedication. That is true of the VCE as well. To meet the needs of the more hands-on students we will in 2017 be offering VET subjects, that would result in a combined certificate of completion – IB careers programme.

Vocational Educational Training (VET) subjects offer students practical courses, like carpentry or hospitality, that they can do off campus at training institutions specifically set up to cater for such specialised areas. The IB organisation has developed MOUs with a number of tertiary institutions across Australia to provide direct entry into courses bypassing the ATAR.

I hope that you have a better picture of the secondary school at Sophia Mundi and appreciate that we have a very viable pathway from Prep to year 12. A school is as strong and vibrant as those people in it. Everyone’s energies and perceptions add to that atmosphere. Now that you have had the chance to better know what is happening in the High School, you can find out more by speaking to the High School teachers and attending information evenings, such as the one on Thursday 19 May.

This is your school. It is a great place to have your children and it is achieving great things. Feel proud of being part of something special.

Our ‘dux’ for this year received a notional ATAR of 98.30 for Victoria and other states/territories (which adjust IB marks up even further) 99.80.

Students have been offered first round places in the following courses:

Bachelor of Photography (Commercial/Art/Photojournalism), (Photography Studies College (Melbourne))

Bachelor Arts, University Of Melbourne

Bachelor of Science, University Of Melbourne

Bachelor of Arts, Monash University

Bachelor of Arts (International Studies), RMIT University

Bachelor of Law/Psychological Science (La Trobe University)

Bachelor of Nursing, La Trobe University

Bachelor of Zoology and Animal Science, Deakin University.

A number of the students are interested in studying postgraduate medicine at Melbourne University and so are completing undergraduate science degrees in preparation. Another student is interested in studying insects and other invertebrates, and is looking at working at the museum to further her knowledge and experience. Students are interested in combining Science/Arts Bachelors with concurrent diploma’s in music and languages.
CLASS 1 CEREMONY WELCOME FROM KATINA

On behalf of our principal Fiona Cock and the teacher and the staff of Sophia Mundi, I would like to warmly welcome you all – the students, your parents families and friends.

I particularly wish to warmly welcome all students new to our school this year, especially you, our new children of class 1 and your parents and family. A big and hearty welcome into the community that is Sophia Mundi.

At this time I know that we all hold Mary Howell in our hearts with gratitudes and fond love.

I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of this land the Wurrundjeri People. I would also like to pay my respects to their Elders, past and present, and the Elders from other communities who may be here today.

Today is the start of the school journey for our class 1 children. This is a day that remains in the memory of every parents for many, many years.

My own son started his school journey 14 years ago at Sophia Mundi and it wasn’t only the inner trepidation but the astonishment and pride I felt for his courage as he walked up those stairs that remains with me as a living reality even today. Amazingly it does soon like it was only yesterday yet he flew through the primary years and all the way to high school and the IB, and is now into his second year at university.

This is a day that symbolises the courageous stepping forth into the world beyond the family of our class 1 children. This moving out into the wider worlds we adults hold dear with joy, with excitement and expectation, with trust and love. We stand aside a little and let them move to the teacher that will cherish and nurture them, who will guide and care for them, and teach them of the rich treasures of our wonderful world.

Dianne, your lovely teacher, has been working through the holidays in preparations for today and is eagerly awaiting greeting you and welcoming you into your new and beautiful room.

You are most fortunate children as not only do you have a wonderful new classroom to make your home for the next year, but this new playground has magically been created for your fun and enjoyment. A special space that you will really have great times playing in. There are a few bits and pieces to finish over the next short time and please stay away from the unfinished areas that have been roped off with the bright coloured tape.

And beyond this classroom and this new adventure playground we find ourselves in a special place in a bend of the Yarra River – a place of deep and spiritual significance for the Aboriginal people of this land. Dianne will no doubt take you for walks along the river and you will discover many new places further afield.

As a part of supporting the young children feel at home and part of the student body Sophia Mundi has a buddy system where the class 1 children are buddied up with class 5 children. Our class 5 teacher Christina and Dianne have put their heads together to pair the children up.

Today the Class 5’s have their first official task as buddies – a very significant and important task of accompanying their class 1 buddy to their new classroom through the threshold and to introduce the children to their teacher Dianne.

There will be lots of comings together across the next two years in particular, but I will leave the delightful details of those occasions to Dianne to Tell you about at a later time.

Before I finish up I would like to invite all our new class 1 parents to a welcome morning tea that the class 2 parents together with our new canteen manager Julie have prepared for you in the canteen once this morning’s proceedings have concluded.

So, in summary good luck for your journey – have lots of fun, enjoy the adventures, do beautiful work and make lots of new friends!
BIOGRAPHY WORK IN 2016

COMMENCES TUESDAY MARCH 1ST, 7.30-9.30PM AT KEW JUNCTION.

Would you like to have a deeper and clearer understanding of your life?

Would you like to be empowered to make more conscious choices and decisions?

Would you like to consider your life story in the light of Anthroposophy?

Biography work is the considered study of one’s life story to date. The gaining of insights, clarity and peace around where we find ourselves now is often the outcome.

Drawing from the work of Anthroposophical authors Bernard Lievegoed, Betty Staley and others we are offering a series of 4 weekly workshops.

Specific weekly processes will look at your 7 year cycles with a focus on the mood, challenges and crises in the thinking, feeling and willing forces at each period.

Facilitated by Anthroposophical Naturopath and Psychotherapist Janie Bailey with psychologist assistance.

Cost $295 in full payable by Thursday 25th February.

All queries to Janie on her email baileyjanie864@gmail.com

The Light Quartet
Michael Johnson  David Jones
Evripides Evripidou  Matthew Arnold

Saturday February 13th 7.30pm
(Doors open 7pm for a 7.30pm start)

Warrandyte Mechanics Hall
Cnr Yarra St & Mitchell Ave. Warrandyte

“Four of Australia’s premier instrumental musicians with backgrounds in world, classical, ambient & jazz will be presenting a concert of original compositions drawing influences from Spanish, Irish, Greek and Middle Eastern cultures.”

The Light Quartet produce extraordinarily beautiful sounds and textures from harp, piano, guitars, viola, violin and percussion instruments.

Bookings: please call 9439 0662, warrandytemusic@gmail.com
www.twilightmusic.com.au
Tickets: Full $28, Conc. $21, Child $10 (under 18)
Our cafe will be open on the evening for refreshments.

CELLO FOR SALE
Enrico Student Extra ¼ size $900

Purchased new from Alex Grant Violins 5 years ago. Body is in excellent condition & the cello sounds beautiful. Requires a new bridge which would cost around $200 to be fitted & a new bow. Includes soft case. Contact Kate Campbell 0425 760 701

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